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USAID Helps Tsunami Victims Resume Normal Lives

A devastating tsunami struck countries bordering the Indian Ocean on December 26 last year. In India, it killed almost 11,000 people and displaced almost 650,000. Within hours, the U.S. Ambassador to India had issued a declaration authorizing U.S. assistance. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) swiftly provided \$4.3 million worth of life-saving relief in the form of water, sanitation, waste management service, temporary shelters, day care centers and psycho-social support. Through extensive cash for work programs, our partners began putting cash back into the pockets of affected people and worked with them to repair boats and engines to restart fishing activities.

USAID has provided an additional \$14 million to finance long-term transition and recovery activities through September 2007. These funds are supporting livelihoods, skills training, protection of women and children, maintaining temporary settlements in habitable conditions and helping communities be better prepared for the next disaster. Also, partnerships have been established between Indian cities struck by the tsunami and U.S. cities that have recently recovered from similar catastrophes.

Benefits to Date from USAID's Program	Units
People provided with water and sanitation in temporary shelters	140,000
Temporary settlements provided with waste management systems	19
Temporary shelters constructed	1,495
Fishing boats and engines repaired	328 and 256
Acres of salt pans rehabilitated to benefit small-scale salt pan holders and re-start their livelihoods	155
Acres of agricultural lands cleared of sand and silt to help small and marginalized farmers re-start agricultural activities	522
Water points rehabilitated	1,100
Person-days of cash for work programs created to provide resources to fishing and non-fishing communities	275,000
Children day care, recreation and non-formal education centers established to help meet needs of 25,000 children and their families.	50
Education/recreation centers established	13
Self help groups provided assistance to restart loans to members for small scale income generation activities	150
Community level mental health workers trained (by June they counseled members of nearly 9,000 families)	2,000

Relief Awards

On December 27, a day after the tsunami struck, USAID disbursed \$100,000 to meet emergency needs. It was divided equally between the Prime Minister's Relief Fund and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Simultaneously, a team of disaster experts from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) was dispatched to some of India's hardest hit areas to assess additional requirements. Working closely with local government officials, affected families and domestic and international non-governmental organizations, these experts shaped USAID's immediate relief response. This took the form of nine grants, valued at \$4.3 million, which were granted to the following organizations:

1. CARE - CARE provided water and sanitation facilities at temporary settlements in the four worst affected districts of Tamil Nadu, i.e. Nagapattinam, Chennai, Cuddalore and Kanyakumari. This program benefited 20,000 families.

2. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) - CRS provided water and sanitation facilities and hygiene training related to latrine use and waste disposal in temporary settlements throughout the tsunami affected areas. The project benefited approximately 75,000 displaced persons. Also, CRS reintegrated 20,000 children (under 15 years) in schools and anganwadis and 5,000 adolescents (15 -18 years) into social and academic life.

3. World Vision - World Vision India constructed over 600 temporary shelters for displaced families in Tamil Nadu and through cash-for-work program, enabled 5,000 families to earn money to meet household needs.

4. Project Concern International (PCI) - PCI carried out recovery and rehabilitation, working closely with 875 families from four villages in Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu. They built temporary shelters, repaired boats for the fishing industry; started cash-for-work options and organized child day care centers; so mothers could seek income opportunities and children heal from the trauma.

5. Exnora - Exnora trained women and youth in participatory waste management/recycling practices in Nagapattinam District. It provided vocational skills training to 3,600 youth.

6. GOAL - GOAL's cash-for-work programs supported repair of damaged properties, thatching of roofs, clearing/disposal of debris, desalinization of ponds, restoration of salt pans, clearing of damaged crops and tree planting. GOAL established child care centers to enable women to participate in these income generating activities. This project benefited 3,000 persons.

7. ACTED - ACTED trained 150 self-help groups in Pondicherry and Cuddalore Districts and granted them cash for microfinance activities. This project benefited 3,805 families.

8. Food for the Hungry - Through its local partner EFICOR, Food for the Hungry conducted cash-for-work projects employing affected people including fishermen, dalits and others. The projects focused on rehabilitation of community assets such as wells, ponds and trees. In addition, Food for the Hungry provided basic assets for trades people and small business owners through an asset-for-work program. This project benefited 4,355 families and 400 trades people.

9. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – The UNDP team for recovery support provided social and psychological support to tsunami affected populations in 13 coastal districts of Tamil Nadu. Working closely with the Tamil Nadu Department of Social Welfare and renowned institutes such as NIMHANS and VIMHANS, this program trained 2,813 community level workers to identify and refer persons with serious symptoms to professional counselors.

Transition and Recovery Support

By the end of September 2005, USAID committed an additional \$14 million for transition and recovery activities.

1. Transition Support for Affected Communities - Building on its initial relief work, USAID's recovery resources are being used to ease the transition of thousands of affected families through this difficult period. USAID has partnered with the following organizations:

- Project Concern International - PCI is maintaining temporary shelters and water, sanitation, health, child care and recreation services to ensure temporary settlements remain healthy and habitable through the monsoon and until the inhabitants are settled in permanent houses. They are helping people get back to work by refurbishing their earning assets. The likelihood of trafficking is being reduced by promoting village-level awareness, skills development and job placement for women and youth.
- Catholic Relief Services – CRS is providing weatherproofing, drainage and organizational and educational services to help ensure temporary shelters remain decent places to live. They are promoting HIV/AIDS and anti-trafficking awareness and helping to develop marketable skills among vulnerable women and youth.
- EXNORA – EXNORA employs its highly effective approaches to community sanitation and solid waste management in temporary communities and apply the same methods in permanent settlements when they appear.

2. UNDP Disaster Risk Management Program – As part of its on-going bilateral program with the Government of India (GOI) in the area of disaster management support, USAID has been supporting village-level disaster preparedness in several states through an agreement with the UNDP Disaster Risk Management Program. USAID assistance is supporting development of village level plans and mock drills in coastal districts prone to cyclones and tsunamis.

3. CityLinks City-to-City Partnerships –USAID India, through a grant to the International City and County Managers Association, will link municipal officials of severely impacted Indian cities of Nagapattinam and Cuddalore with their counterparts in U.S. coastal communities of Florida that have recently experienced similar catastrophes and then led successful recovery efforts.

For more about U.S. tsunami assistance in India go to www.usaid.gov/in - see images of affected areas and response progress, read stories about people recovering from the disaster and link to information about U.S. efforts across the Indian Ocean region.

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